

Message from the Executive Director

I look back at 1983 as a very significant year for Aspira. In November I celebrated my first anniversary as the Executive Director of Aspira, and I am happy to report that I am alive and well. The first year of any new administration is always difficult. It is a period of adjustment and constant assessment. It is also a time for establishing relationships and setting direction.

For me, it has been a tremendous learning experience and an opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to the mission of an organization that has been so instrumental in my own personal and professional development. For me, working at Aspira is a labor of love and an opportunity to make a contribution to a movement that has so deeply enriched my life and thousands of Aspirantes like myself.

My transition was relatively smooth, thanks to a committed Board of Directors, a hard working and highly skilled staff, and to all of you who have unselfishly shared your resources to support my efforts and Aspira's program. To all of you I say "un million de gracias," and let's continue to work together to make a difference in the lives of present and future Aspirantes.

Aspira's effectiveness and relevancy was reinforced in 1983 as a result of an independent national study conducted by Coca Cola USA which addressed Hispanic concerns. In the survey, respondents were asked to "identify the organization which has been most effective in meeting the needs of the Hispanic community." Aspira took the lead as the most effective Hispanic organization, nationwide! It is clear from the results of the study that education and job training are the priority areas among Hispanics. To that end, Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey continues to provide resources to assist youth in breaking the cycle of poverty.

We continue to serve students in the counties of Essex, Hudson and Passaic. Although we were forced to close our Hudson County Center due to funding cutbacks, Aspira continues to serve the youth of that community on site at the schools and we hope it is only a matter of time before a center will again be established.

For the past year Aspira has successfully expanded its program to include junior high school students under the premise that early intervention will have an impact in reducing the dropout rate of Hispanic high school students.

Our career oriented programs (Business & Health) continue to prove effective and serve both high school and college students in pursuing their career goals.

Finally, Aspira has initiated the development of an Alumni Network to bring back to the organization the talent and resources of those individuals who have been a part of the Aspira Movement.

The future looks bright for Aspira. With the assistance of the Board, staff, and the community at large, we will continue to strive for:

- the development of leadership among Hispanic youth;
- the achievement of educational goals for Aspirantes;
- the assurance of equity for Hispanic youth as they seek to reach their full potential; and
- the enrichment of the community at large through the contributions of the Hispanic population.

To this end, we are committed. I hope that I can continue to count on your support to make these goals a reality.



A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Maria V. DeSoto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'M' and 'D'.

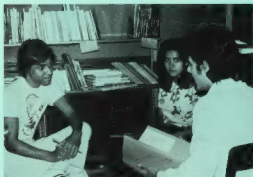
Maria Vizcarrondo-DeSoto
Executive Director
June 1984

Program Report 1983

When Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey was established in 1968, its intent was to break the cycle of poverty within the Puerto Rican community. Its goals were to stem the high drop out rate, and to promote the development of leaders through the pursuit of higher education. To this end, Aspira has been faithfully providing quality services in Essex, Hudson, and Passaic Counties. Although the majority of students seen are Hispanic, Aspira offers its services to disadvantaged youth of all ethnic backgrounds, many of whom suffer from inadequate schooling, sub-standard housing, and limited life experience.

Aspira provided services through three County centers located in Newark, Jersey City and Paterson. Each center conducted activities specific to the local area, including career workshops, cultural and recreational activities, and workshops related to the college admissions process.

Students involved in Aspira's programs received individual counseling from bilingual, bi-cultural professionals who served as role models and who encouraged and motivated these Aspirantes to complete their high school education. Students also participated in a variety of activities designed to expand career awareness, promote leadership development and enhance their self-image.



A counselor discusses financial aid opportunities with these students accepted at college.

Essex County Center

In Essex County students attended specialized Science, Dentistry, Financial Aid, Interview Skills, Resume Writing, Nursing, Poetry, Music and Literature workshops. Students also took part in field trips to business schools, colleges and universities.

A tutoring program in math and science was enhanced by the addition of a computer and assorted software. Aspirantes are given training in the use of the computer and programs in reading, algebra and geometry.

A major accomplishment in 1983 was the expansion of services to include junior high school students at Barringer Preparatory School. This move reflects Aspira's efforts to reach students as early as possible. In Essex County Aspira now serves students in grades 7 through college.

Hudson County

This year, Aspira was able to expand its Business Careers Program to Hudson County. This allowed counselors to serve at Dickinson and Snyder, as well as Ferris and Lincoln High Schools. The Health Careers program continued strong at Hoboken High School with an active club of 40 members.

Activities conducted in the Leadership Clubs in Hudson County included a Pre-Med Seminar and workshops in Job Skills, Computer Science, Career Planning and



An Aspira Club meeting at Ferris High School focuses on business career options.



Students from Essex, Hudson and Passaic Counties attend the Aspira Career Day Conference at St. Peter's College.

Goal Setting, Communication Skills, and Assertiveness Training, among others. A total of 13 field trips were also conducted.

A highlight was the participation of students from the Peer Counseling Program on a panel at a Youth Conference sponsored by the Association of Children. These youngsters presented the goals and objectives of Aspira and Proyecto Entre Iguales regarding capacity building in adolescents and self-help techniques.

Passaic County Center

Thanks to a Talent Search grant, the Passaic County Center was able to resume services in November 1982. Many activities were offered, including an SAT Review Course as well as workshops in Financial Aid and the College Admissions Process, Careers in Computers, Interview Techniques, and Communication Skills. In addition, field trips were conducted to William Paterson College, Rutgers University, Taylor Business Institute, and NJIT, among others.

A special accomplishment was the establishment of the Passaic County Aspira Clubs Federation composed of the officers of the Leadership Clubs in Passaic County. This Federation was able to raise \$600 which was awarded as scholarships to Jeanette Torres, John F. Kennedy High School; Donna Manradge, Eastside High School; and Pedro Sanchez, Passaic High School.

Statewide Activities

This year, the **Business/Engineering Conference** was co-sponsored at New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). Aspirantes from three counties participated in workshops conducted by minority professionals in the fields of engineering, computer science and business. The **Health Professions Conference**, co-sponsored at Mt. Sinai Hospital's School of Medicine in New York, was the first time the Aspiras of New York/New Jersey joined to implement an activity of this sort. This effort attracted students who were given the opportunity to speak directly with minority health care professionals who shared their experiences with the application process and what it's like to be in medical or dental school. The Aspirantes also attended workshops related to the future health professional, and met with admission recruiters from twenty-one health professional institutions.

Historically, minority students score lower on standardized admissions tests such as the SAT or the GMAT. To address this issue each Aspira Center conducted an **SAT Review Course**, designed to improve

the raw score of the participants through tutoring and coaching, hints and practice in test-taking, and training in relaxation techniques.

Similar courses are conducted for college students heading for graduate school by the Business Careers Program in the **MCAT/DAT**. This year, the MCAT Review Course was taught by ETS through a grant from Funds for the Improvement of Secondary Education (FIPSE). This was a two phase project which involved long-term coaching and extensive experience in test taking which is one proven way of increasing scores.

In addition to the conference, which exposed students to careers, and the Review Courses, which increased their chances of gaining admission into higher education, the **Leadership Clubs Program** in the schools focussed on the development of success skills and provided a forum for promoting a positive self-image. Participants conducted meetings, planned and implemented activities and did fundraising. The Passaic County Center coordinated Aspira's first annual **Leadership Conference** which was co-sponsored at Passaic County Community College. Aspirantes from all three counties attended workshops in public speaking, activity planning, and good management after hearing keynote speaker Janice Newman of "Newark and Reality" talk about the qualities of a good leader and the need for self-determination and perseverance if one is to succeed.

The **Leadership Retreat** in August was made possible this year through the generosity of Princeton University's Education Center at Blairstown, N.J. Fifty-four students attended this residential seminar which included training in communication skills, time management, goal setting and planning, parliamentary procedure and trust exercises designed to promote self-confidence and group cohesion. Students left with a greater sense of self and possessing the skills needed to succeed.

Aspira is proud of its Aspirantes. The **Annual Awards Ceremony** highlighted special accomplishments of students. Achievement Certificates were awarded to actual or potential drop-outs who have taken charge of their lives and have completed their high school degrees, in many cases going on to college. Leadership Certificates were given to individuals who have been active in the Leadership Clubs. We also acknowledged, through the awarding of Certificates of Appreciation, the contribution of our outside resource persons who are supportive of Aspira's goals and without whom we could not accomplish them. Plaques were awarded for meritorious achievement in academics and leadership. This year the recipients were:

- Academic Achievement --
Oxiris Barbot; Wilberto Vasquez; Anthony Romero
- Excellence in Leadership --
Luis Castillo; Anibal Cintron



Students learn time management skills during the Annual Leadership Conference.

Highlights

Aspira Professionals Acknowledged

The success of Aspira can be measured by the professionals it employs. All program staff are college graduates who are bilingual and bi-cultural like most of those worked with. Many come from backgrounds similar to that of their students and can relate to them in a personal way. A few have undergone the Aspira Process and have returned to pass on their experiences to others and thus continue the cycle of progress. Aspira counselors are dedicated individuals committed to social change and consequently involved in outside activities for the betterment of the community.

A good example is Mr. Jose R. Acevedo, Health Careers Specialist, who received an award from Passaic County Community College in recognition of his contributions to the advancement of the Puerto Rican community in Passaic County.

Ms. Betty Gerena, Coordinator of the Passaic County Center, has been selected as an Outstanding Young Woman in America for 1983. This selection was made on the basis of ability, accomplishments and services to the community.

New Leaders Added to Board

New leadership has been added to Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey's Board of Directors. Ms. Caridad Laboy, a product of the Aspira Process, holds an MBA from Rutgers University. Ms. Laboy is an Account Executive with American Bell.

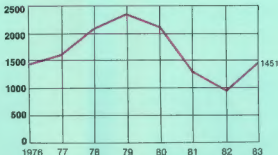
Ms. Damaris Mercado is a students representative on the Board. She is currently a high school senior at Barringer High School and intends to pursue a career in pharmacy. The other student representative is Ms. Jeanette Torres, a pre-med student at Montclair State College (MSC) and a member of Aspira's RWJ Health Careers Program.

Mr. Ronald Palm of the Veteran's Administration, and Ms. Mirva Rivera, a school teacher from Paterson, have also accepted positions on the Board. Mr. William Vazquez, an Aspirante who is presently an administrator at St. Elizabeth Hospital, completed the new members.

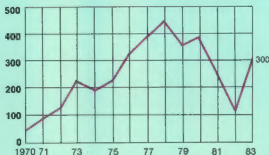
Nation's Puerto Ricans Come to Newark

The National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights (NCPRR), a national organization advocating for the civil rights of Hispanics in the U.S., celebrated its second convention at NJIT in April. Over 650 people came from all over the United States and Puerto Rico to attend sixteen workshops in areas of concern to Hispanics such as Housing, Education, and Labor. Participants departed with new strategies for addressing these concerns in the 1980's. Aspira was supportive of this effort, contributing space, phone, printing, and other services to the Planning/Coordinating Committee. Aspira staff volunteered their time in publicity and registration.

Students Served 1976-1983



Post-Secondary Placements 1970-1983



Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey
Statement of Support, Revenue and Expenses and Changes in Fund Balances
Year Ended June 30, 1983

Financial Highlights

	CURRENT FUNDS			
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Fixed asset fund	Total all funds
Public support, grants and revenue:				
Corporations and foundations	\$ 63,905	\$ 65,696	\$10,466	\$140,067
Government grants	-	149,025	-	149,025
Transfers from Aspira of America, Inc.	3,422	105,036	-	108,458
Community, including United Way	31,405	-	-	31,405
Capital contributions	-	-	5,156	5,156
Miscellaneous	18,820	-	-	18,820
Transfers of administrative overheads	14,216	(14,216)	-	-
Total public support, grants and revenue	131,768	305,541	15,622	452,931
Expenses:				
Program Services:				
Health career opportunities	-	75,838	-	75,838
Public education	18,057	-	-	18,057
Other career and educational counseling	-	238,008	-	238,008
Total program services	18,057	313,846	-	331,903
Supporting Services:				
Management and general	69,384	-	2,080	71,464
Fund raising	24,543	-	-	24,543
Total supporting services	93,927	-	2,080	96,007
Total expenses	111,984	313,846	2,080	427,910
Excess (deficiency) of public support, grants and revenue over expenses	19,784	(8,305)	13,542	25,021
Transfers from (to) other funds	(3,254)	7,258	(4,004)	-
Fund balance (deficit), beginning of period	(40,794)	4,893	2,230	(33,671)
Fund balances (deficit), end of period	\$(24,264)	\$ 3,846	\$11,768	\$ (8,650)

Private Grants and Contributions (through June 1984)

Agency Contributors and Community Funds

Foundations

The Becton, Dickinson Foundation
The Max & Dora Cooper Family Foundation
Thomas A. & J. Mildred Dexter Foundation
Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
Charles Hayden Foundation
The Hyde & Watson Foundation
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
The Fanny and Svante Knistrom Foundation
Leavens Foundation
The Merck Company Foundation
Jay R. Monroe Memorial Foundation
Prudential Foundation
Roxitcus Fund
The Florence and John Schumann Foundation
Turrell Fund
Victoria Foundation, Inc.

Atlantic Community College
Aspira of America
Bloomfield College
Essex County College
Hudson County Community College
International Ladies
Garment Workers Union
Jersey City State College
Kean College of New Jersey
Lambda Theta Phi
Montclair State College
New Jersey Institute of
Technology
North Ward Center, Inc.
Passaic County Community College
Regional Health Planning Council
Rutgers University
St. Peter's College
Seton Hall University
Stevens Institute of
Technology
Tri-City Peoples Corp.
United Way of Essex and
West Hudson
University of Medicine and
Dentistry in New Jersey
WOR-TV
YMWCA-Newark

Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey
Statement of Functional Expenses
Year Ended June 30, 1983

Financial Highlights

	PROGRAM SERVICES				SUPPORTING SERVICES			Total Expenses
	Health Career Opportunities	Public Education	Other Career and Educational Counseling	Total	Management and General	Fund Raising	Total	
Salaries	\$44,613	\$ 4,200	\$121,355	\$170,168	\$22,062	-	\$22,062	\$192,230
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	9,506	840	21,758	32,104	6,711	-	6,711	38,815
Total salaries and related costs	54,119	5,040	143,113	202,272	28,773	-	28,773	231,045
Board activities and meetings	-	-	-	-	308	-	308	308
Education and program materials	-	-	2,631	2,631	68	-	68	2,699
Interest	-	-	182	182	1,047	-	1,047	1,229
Occupancy, utilities and maintenance	6,214	-	20,152	26,366	7,916	105	8,021	34,387
Other office operating expenses	1,117	-	1,985	3,102	963	-	963	4,065
Printing and publications	637	1,536	1,945	4,118	5,051	2,349	7,400	11,518
Professional fees and contractual services	2,857	10,050	21,176	34,083	10,511	21,353	31,864	65,947
Program activities, seminars and workshops	1,611	-	5,615	7,226	2,934	-	2,934	10,160
Student scholarships, stipends and fellowships	-	-	14,850	14,850	-	-	-	14,850
Supplies and equipment rental	4,189	-	8,666	12,855	3,461	-	3,461	16,316
Telephone and postage	3,656	268	12,175	16,099	1,133	480	1,613	17,712
Travel and meetings	712	1,097	4,688	6,497	2,304	256	2,560	9,057
Miscellaneous	37	66	62	165	4,915	-	4,915	5,080
Total expenses before depreciation and amortization	75,149	18,057	237,240	330,446	69,384	24,543	93,927	424,373
Depreciation and amortization	689	-	768	1,457	2,080	-	2,080	3,537
	\$75,838	\$18,057	\$238,008	\$331,903	\$71,464	\$24,543	\$96,007	\$427,910

Corporations

Airco, Inc.
 Allied Corporation
 Arrow Group Industries, Inc.
 At&T/Bell Labs
 Bally's Park Place Casino Hotel
 Barton Savings & Loan Assoc.
 Broad National Bank
 Ciba-Geigy Corp.
 City National Bank of NJ
 Connection Communications Corp.
 Joseph Cory Warehouses, Inc.

Crum & Forster Corp.
 Edwards & Kelcey, Inc.
 Fidelity Union Trust Co.
 First Jersey National Bank
 First National State Bank of NJ
 Gateway Hilton
 Hoffmann-La Roche, Inc.
 Howard Savings Bank
 Jacobs
 Johnson & Johnson
 Laventhol & Horwath

Margon Corporation
 Midiantic National Bank
 Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Co.
 Nabisco, Inc.
 New Jersey Bell
 Prudential Insurance Co. of America
 PSE&G
 Sandoz, Inc.
 Schering-Plough Corp.
 Scott Printing Corp.
 Supermarkets General Corp.

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Annual Report

July 1, 1982 to June 30, 1983

